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## LOCALLY-BASED TRAINERS ASSESS JUSTIFY'S TRIPLE CROWN HOPE

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Friday, June 8, 2018)** – As Kentucky Derby (Grade I) and Preakness Stakes (GI) winner **Justify** attempts to make history by becoming the 13<sup>th</sup> Triple Crown winner, some of Churchill Downs' trainers gave their expertise on whether or not the 3-year-old has what it takes. Here's what they had to say:

- Trainer **Phil Bauer** – "I think it's a Churchill Downs exacta – Justify and Tenfold."
- Trainer **"Buff" Bradley** – "I liked Hofburg and Good Magic in the Derby so I'll have to think Hofburg will run well in the Belmont. It will obviously be tough to beat Justify."
- Trainer **Pat Byrne** – "Can't Justify any other horse."
- Trainer **Bret Calhoun** – "I don't think anyone will be able to beat Justify. It was interesting looking at the track condition for the Preakness. It sort of seemed like the track was pretty sticky and Bob (Baffert) and Jimmy (Barnes) told me the horses looked exhausted cooling out after the race. However, the way Justify was able to bounce out of that race and train the last few weeks here at Churchill, it showed me he is in great shape for the Belmont."
- Trainer **Norm Casse** – "If Justify doesn't bring his top game, I like Vino Rosso."
- Trainer **Brad Cox** – "I think it's either Justify or Hofburg."
- Trainer **Tim Glyshaw** – "In my opinion, Justify will win. You have to be close to the pace to win 1 ½-mile races and I don't think anyone else can stay close to him."
- Trainer **Neil Howard** – "He just sort of takes your breath away. The way Bob's program is run is phenomenal. Everyone involved is so crucial to getting a horse to compete at the highest level to win the Triple Crown. I love what he's been able to do with Martin Garcia. He knows the horse so well and Bob trusts Martin to give the right feedback while he's on horseback. Martin is a true student of the game and I think that helps make Justify successful."
- Trainer **Rob O'Connor II** – "I certainly wouldn't want to bet against Justify. For all we know, he may not have even liked a wet track. He looked the best horses in the eye in the Preakness and still held them off."
- Trainer **Dallas Stewart** – "You have to go with Justify. In my opinion he's the fastest horse in the race."

**CHURCHILL DOWNS CONNECTIONS SET FOR A BIG WEEKEND AT BELMONT PARK** – Several locally-based connections are in Elmont, N.Y. this weekend for Belmont Park's "Racing Festival" centered around the third jewel of the Triple Crown, the \$1.5 million Belmont Stakes (Grade I).

Fans are invited to root on **WinStar Farm**, **China Horse Club**, **Head of Plains Partners** and **Starlight Racing's Justify** as the undefeated colt attempts to become the 13<sup>th</sup> Triple Crown winner in Saturday's 150<sup>th</sup> Belmont Stakes (GI) for trainer **Bob Baffert** and jockey **Mike Smith**. The 13-race program at Belmont is a stakes bonanza with 10 overall, including six Grade I events. The action begins at 11:35 a.m. so Churchill Downs will open its admission gates early at 11:15 a.m. NYRA has three guaranteed wagering pools Saturday: a \$500,000 Pick 5 (Races 1-5); \$500,000 Pick 6 (Races 6-11 ending with the Belmont Stakes); and \$1.5 million Pick 4 (Races 8-11).

The pomp of the Belmont Park action will be featured prominently at Churchill Downs on Saturday with the simulcast of the 1 ½-mile Belmont Stakes scheduled for 6:46 p.m., which comes after the final live race at 5:58 p.m. Video and audio of a majority of the stakes races from Belmont will be shown between races on the track's massive Big Board when they don't conflict with live action.

The \$1.5 million Belmont Stakes (GI) features four Churchill Downs-based horses including Justify: **Calumet Farms' Bravazo** ridden by **Luis Saez** and trained by **D. Wayne Lukas**, 8-1 (morning line); **Albaugh Family Stables' Free Drop Billy**, ridden by jockey **Robby Albarado** for trainer **Dale Romans**, 30-1; **Winchell Thoroughbreds' Tenfold** with **Ricardo Santana Jr.** in the saddle for trainer **Steve Asmussen**, 12-1; and **Gary and Mary West's Restoring Hope**, who is trained by Baffert and will be ridden by **Florent Geroux**, 30-1.

Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI) winner **Monomoy Girl** returns to action in the \$700,000 Acorn (GI) for locally-based trainer **Brad Cox** and jockey Geroux. The six-time winner is set to take on **Gio Game** for trainer **Mark Casse**, who most recently won an allowance race at Churchill Downs.

Cox is also scheduled to run **High North** in the \$150,000 Easy Goer with Geroux aboard.

Three-time winner **Giant Payday** is set to take on eight rivals in the \$400,000 Brooklyn (GII) for trainer **Ian Wilkes** and jockey **Chris Landeros**. Later in the card, in the \$1 million Manhattan (GI), Landeros is set to ride Elkhorn (GII) winner **One Go All Go** for trainer **Scooter Dickey**.

Hutcheson winner **Madison's Luna** will take on locally-based rivals **Pure Shot** (trainer Asmussen), **Givemeaminit** (Dallas Stewart) and **Promises Fulfilled** (Romans) in the \$400,000 Woody Stephens (GII) for trainer **Phil Bauer**.

Longines Distaff Turf Mile (GII) winner **Proctor's Ledge** will face seven rivals in the \$700,000 Just a Game (GI) for trainer **Brendan Walsh**. Also in the Just a Game field is **Dream Dancing** and **La Coronel** for Casse.

The **Churchill Downs Racing Club** will test the waters in the \$1.2 million Met Mile (GI) with Churchill Downs Stakes (GII) runner-up **Warrior's Club**. Other horses with Churchill Downs connections in the Met Mile field are **Bee Jersey** (Asmussen), **Awesome Slew** (Casse), **Limousine Liberal** (Ben Colebrook) and **McCraken** (Wilkes).

NBCSN will air action from Belmont Park from 2-4 p.m. Belmont Stakes action shifts to **NBC** from 4-7 p.m.

Guests at Churchill Downs will have an opportunity to enjoy a New York-themed food and beverage offerings. **Levy Restaurants** will sell the Belmont Jewel – the official drink of the Belmont Stakes (includes Woodford Reserve, lemonade, pomegranate juice and an orange zest) – complete with a commemorative glass. Also, a New York pastrami sandwich will be sold at BBQ stands.

Last call for drinks on Saturday will be “Call to the Post” for the Belmont Stakes, and all dining rooms will remain open through the big race.

Advance wagering on Saturday's 150<sup>th</sup> Belmont Stakes (Grade I) from Belmont Park will be offered all day Friday at Churchill Downs. Admission gates open Friday at 11:30 a.m. and the first of nine races is 12:45 p.m. General admission is \$3.

Five stakes races are carded Friday for Belmont's 11-race program, including the \$600,000 New York (GII) for fillies and mares at 1 ¼ miles on the inner turf and \$400,000 Belmont Gold Cup Invitational (GII) for 4-year-olds and up at two miles on the Widener Turf Course. The two races go as Races 9 and 10 at 5:14 p.m. and 5:46 p.m., respectively, and will be televised on **NBCSN** from 5-6 p.m.

Similar to Churchill Downs' popular Oaks/Derby Double, the New York Racing Association (NYRA) will offer a pair of two-day doubles: the New York Stakes/Metropolitan Handicap Double, which has a \$100,000 guarantee, and the \$300,000 guaranteed Belmont Gold Cup/Belmont Stakes Double. There is also a \$500,000 guaranteed Late Pick 4 from Belmont on Races 8-11.

**ORTIZ EYES FIRST GRADED STAKES WIN FOR SULLY'S DREAM** – **Ralph Ebert, Patrick Waresk, Michael Waresk, Vegas Mathiesen** and **Ralph Taylor's** two-time stakes winner **Sully's Dream** will attempt to win her first graded stakes race as the 4-1 co-third choice on the morning line in Saturday's 42<sup>nd</sup> running of the \$100,000 Old Forester Mint Julep Handicap (Grade III) at Churchill Downs.

“She's really been training well into this race,” trainer **John Ortiz** said. “She is kind of a difficult filly to handle at times. In her last start I think it was a bit too long for her after she got keyed up early and went too fast. You can't really ask her to slow down when she's on the front end. So, when she got keyed up early it was hard for her to stay close after 1 ½ miles.”

Sully's Dream (18-6-0-1—\$192,199) began her 2018 campaign with a one-length triumph in the Houston Ladies Distaff at Sam Houston. Following a fourth-place effort in the Bayakoa (GIII) at Oaklawn Park, the 4-year-old Colonel John filly returned to the winner's circle in the New Orleans Ladies Overnight Stakes.

“We're really excited to hopefully get some graded-stakes placing in her past performances,” Ortiz said. “The way she's been training, she should run well Saturday.”

Jockey **Jack Gilligan** picks up the mount on Sully's Dream and will break from Post 6.

The field for the Old Forester Mint Julep Handicap from the rail out (with jockey, assigned weight and morning line odds): **Res Ipsa** (Declan Cannon, 117 pounds, 7-2); **Red Dane (ITY)** (Gabriel Saez, 113, 15-1); **Lovely Bernadette** (Corey Lanerie, 119, 3-1); **Celestial Insight** (Joe Rocco Jr., 116, 4-1); **Inchargeofme (GB)** (Adam Beschizza, 115, 20-1); Sully's Dream (Gilligan, 116, 4-1); **Ministry** (Edgar Morales, 114, 20-1); **Youngest Daughter** (Jon Court, 114, 20-1); **Dubara (GB)** (Calvin Borel, 115, 20-1); **Inveniam Viam** (James Graham, 115, 8-1); and **Victory to Victory** (Shaun Bridgmohan, 117, 10-1).

The Old Forester Mint Julep Handicap, a 1 1/16-mile test over the Matt Winn Turf Course, has been carded as the finale on Saturday's 11-race program with a post time of 5:58 p.m. (all times Eastern). Churchill Downs' traditional early June stakes event serves as a prelude to a simulcast of the \$1.5 million Belmont Stakes (GI) from New York's Belmont Park as Kentucky Derby and Preakness winner **Justify** bids to become horse racing's 13<sup>th</sup> Triple Crown winner.

The Belmont Stakes will be shown on Churchill Downs' massive outdoor “Big Board” and other television monitors throughout the facility after the final race at approximately 6:46 p.m. Post time for the first race at Churchill Downs is 12:45 p.m. and admission gates will open early at 11:15 a.m. for the first of 13 simulcast races from Belmont Park, which starts at 11:35 a.m.

**STAKES PROBABLES** – Next Saturday's **Downs After Dark Presented by Budweiser** 11-race program is highlighted by the \$500,000 Stephen Foster Handicap (GI) and \$200,000 Fleur de Lis Handicap (GII). Both races are part of the Breeders' Cup “Win and You're In” Challenge Series. The winner of the Stephen Foster receives an automatic berth to the Nov. 3 Breeders' Cup Classic while the Fleur de Lis victor receives a starting gate spot in the Breeders' Cup Distaff at Churchill Downs.

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Along with the Stephen Foster and Fleur de Lis, the 11-race card offers three other graded stakes events. Below are the known probable entrants for all five races, according to Churchill Downs assistant racing secretary and stakes coordinator **Dan Bork** (note: race order is tentative and subject to change):

**Race 5 (7:57 p.m. ET) – \$100,000 Matt Winn (Grade III), 3-year-olds, 1 1/16 miles, 21<sup>st</sup> running**

**Probable (with trainer):** Combatant (Steve Asmussen); Home Base (Mike Tomlinson); King Zachary (Dale Romans); Quip (Rodolphe Brisset); and Tiz Mischief (Dale Romans)

**Race 6 (8:30 p.m. ET) – \$200,000 Wise Dan (Grade II), 3-year-olds and up, 1 1/16 miles on turf, 29<sup>th</sup> running**

**Probable (with trainer):** Mr Cub (Ian Wilkes); Mr. Misunderstood (Brad Cox); Parlor (Eddie Kenneally); and World Approval (Mark Casse)

**Race 7 (9:05 p.m. ET) – \$200,000 Fleur de Lis Handicap (Grade II), fillies and mares, 1 1/8 miles, 43<sup>rd</sup> running**

**Probable (with trainer):** Farrell (Wayne Catalano); Fuhriously Kissed (Anthony Quattaro); Song of Spring (Neil Howard); and Valadorna (Mark Casse)

**Race 8 (9:39 p.m. ET) – \$500,000 Stephen Foster Handicap (Grade I), 3-year-olds and up, 1 1/8 miles, 37<sup>th</sup> running**

**Probable (with trainer):** Backyard Heaven (Chad Brown), Hawaakom (Wes Hawley); Honorable Duty (Brendan Walsh); Irish War Cry (Graham Motion); Leofric (Brad Cox); Lookin At Lee (Steve Asmussen); and Patch (Todd Pletcher)

**Race 9 (10:11 p.m. ET) – \$100,000 Regret (Grade III), 3-year-old fillies, 1 1/8 miles on turf, 49<sup>th</sup> running**

**Probable (with trainer):** Go Google Yourself (Paul McGee); Heavenly Love (Mark Casse); Kabella (Dan Peitz); Secret Message (Graham Motion); Sassy Sienna (Brad Cox); She's Pretty Lucky (Eddie Kenneally); and Stave (Larry Jones)

**DOWN THE STRETCH** – Racing continues Friday at Churchill Downs with a first post of 12:45 p.m. There is a \$420,610 carryover in the 20-cent Single 6 Jackpot that kicks off in Race 4 at 2:13 p.m. ... The hosts of “Inside Churchill Downs” – Churchill Downs Racetrack’s **John Asher**, **Darren Rogers** and **Kevin Kerstein** – will preview Saturday’s Churchill Downs and Belmont Park racing action with an array of handicappers on their 6-7 p.m. show that airs every Friday on **ESPN 680/105.7**. Those outside the Louisville area can listen live online at <http://www.espnloisville.com/> or download a podcast of the show after its completion. ... Churchill Downs has a special **Stakes & Eggs** brunch in the Stakes Room on Sunday for \$45. Tickets can be purchased in advance online at [ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets](http://ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets).

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